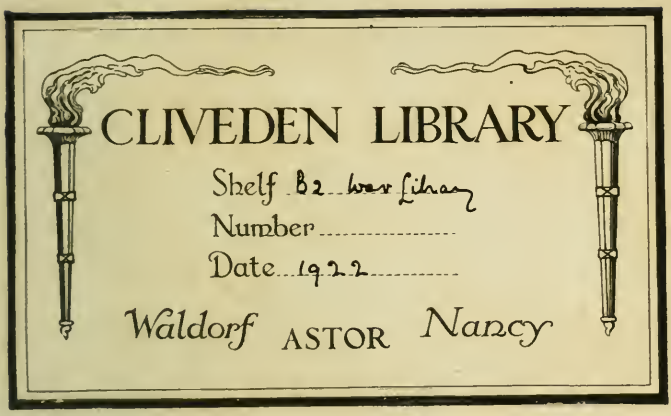
THE WAR AND THE BALKANS

NOEL BUXTON
CHARLES RODEN BUXTON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THE WAR AND THE BALKANS

TOWARDS A LASTING SETTLEMENT

BY

G. LOWES DICKINSON,
H. N. BRAILSFORD,
J. A. HOBSON, VERNON LEE,
PHILIP SNOWDEN, M.P.,
A. MAUD ROYDEN,
H. SIDEBOTHAM, AND OTHERS.

Edited by CHARLES RODEN BUXTON.

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By NOEL BUXTON, M.P.,
and CHARLES RODEN BUXTON

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

We republish this little book because it has been found by experience to meet a widely-felt need, and to meet it in a compendious form.

The dangers against which we uttered so strong a warning have unfortunately been realised: Bulgaria has joined our enemies. As a result, some paragraphs will be found to be out of date. But we have thought it best to leave the whole book unchanged, except that the chapter which deals with the diplomatic methods of the moment is now relegated to an appendix.

Nothing has happened to disprove our contention that these methods would have succeeded at the time when they were proposed, and though in the Near East it is the unexpected that happens, the time may come when they will be once more in place.

The book in its original form was, and is, a connected whole. It sets forth certain principles and a certain ideal, which have by no means lost their importance. The immediate prospect is obscure, but, to those who look to the ultimate settlement, the complications of the moment represent a movement of the surface rather than of the depths beneath.

There are factors in Balkan policy which are fundamental because they are rooted in conditions which do not alter. It was upon these factors that the policy set forth in this book was founded.

The first arises from the geographical position of the Balkans, which has made them the battleground for the rivalry of the great neighbouring empires—a rivalry which found material to work upon in the mutual hatred caused by unjust frontiers. It follows from this that so long as such rivalry continues, it is to the real and permanent advantage of every Balkan State, without exception, to look for support to the disinterested Powers of the West.

The second factor arises from the distribution of Balkan nationalities. "Room must be found and kept," to use Mr. Asquith's words, "for the independent existence and free development of the small nationalities, each with a corporate consciousness of its own."

Any rearrangement which fails to take this consideration into account will leave behind it the seeds of future war. Others will doubtless be urged at the time of settlement—economic and strategic needs, the idea of a Balkan equilibrium or balance of power, and the desirability of rewarding or punishing particular States. But it cannot be too often insisted that peace will not be secured unless, broadly speaking, the lines of nationality are accepted as the basis for the new frontiers. The degree in which this ideal may be attainable is, of course, a matter of uncertainty. But real statesmanship will bear it in mind, and approach as near to it as circumstances allow.

N. E. B.
C. R. B.

2, Prince's Gate,
18th November, 1915.

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I.

THE BALKANS AND THE WAR.

No one now denies the supreme importance of the Balkans as a factor in the European War. It may be that there were deep-seated hostilities between the Great Powers which would have, in any case, produced a European War, and that if the Balkans had not offered the occasion, the occasion would have been found elsewhere. The fact remains that the Balkans did provide the occasion. A great part of the Serbo-Croat race found itself under the Austrian Empire, and with its increasing consciousness of nationality became more and more dissatisfied with its lot. The independent kingdom of Serbia for its part has taken active steps to spread abroad the idea of uniting its brothers under its own flag. It was Austria's ambition to crush this dangerous little State, the one rallying point of a vigorous and determined race.

The murder of the Austrian Crown Prince

at Serajevo was attributed to Serbian intrigues. The insulting ultimatum of Austria followed. Serbia could not accept it. The flame of war burst out, and Russia, to save the little Slav kingdom, and to settle her account with Austria, flew to arms.

A similar question had arisen in 1908, when Russia protested against Austria's action in annexing Bosnia, but decided not to resort to the arbitrament of war, and when Germany threatened to fight at Austria's side as the ally "in shining armour." On the present occasion, confident in her friends, Russia stood firm. The rest was a matter of alliances, guarantees, and mutual jealousies, each of the protagonists calling to its aid such friends as it could muster among the Great Powers of the West.

The course of events was natural. The Balkans have long been recognised as the danger-point of Europe. The difference which distinguishes the south-eastern corner from the rest of the Continent is that in that region men do not look upon their frontiers and future of their nation, even the existence of their nation, as things established and

secure. Elsewhere, as in Alsace-Lorraine, Poland, and Galicia, there are points of insecurity; but on the whole the various States represent national units, which in their broad outlines will remain the same for as long a time as men can now foresee. But in the Balkan Peninsula, and in the bordering regions of Austria, Hungary, and Turkey, men still feel wholly uncertain as to the frontiers which their country will ultimately possess. The Serbs, for instance, have long been doubtful whether their expansion will be toward the Adriatic or the Ægean. The Greeks do not know whether their centre of gravity will be in Europe or in Asia.

Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro, in considering whether to enter into the war, have to contemplate a possibility, almost inconceivable to the Western mind. If they enter into it, they do so with the consciousness that their very existence as States, not merely their prosperity or their size, may well be at stake.

If the Balkans were the danger-point of Europe, the danger-point of the Balkans was Macedonia.

Here the uncertainty of the future allocation of territory, not to speak of the sufferings of the inhabitants, rose to their highest point.

For thirty years it has been, in Lord Lansdowne's phrase, "a standing menace to European peace."

To find a parallel to the present Balkan situation, and to understand the psychology of Balkan politics, we must go back to the period, let us say, before the beginnings of the revolutionary spirit in Europe had taken tangible shape. A careful observer, looking at the great territories which we now call Italy, Germany, and Hungary, would have seen in them the seeds of disturbance and potentiality of earthquake. Men were becoming increasingly conscious of their distinct national existence, of a national history, a national culture, and were demanding some expression for it. To what length this demand would go, or what it would produce, was uncertain, but it was clear that political forms which had been evolved without regard to the new spirit were destined to go. The Treaty of Vienna still

stood, but its authority was sapped, because none would believe in its permanence. The situation in the South-East of Europe is not dissimilar. It is true that some steps have been already taken toward the realisation of nationality, but half the work is still undone. The Save, the Danube, the Carpathians, and the waters of the Ægean are still regarded as the boundaries of the Balkan States; but men are beginning to think hopefully or uneasily that such boundaries will soon be found too narrow.

The Treaty of Berlin has gone by the board. The Treaty of Bucarest, which regulated the internal frontiers of the Balkans, has taken its place, but the ink on that treaty is hardly dry: it is recognised by most of its own authors as already superseded.

It is natural that a region so full of the possibilities of strife should form a focus for the rivalry of the great empires which border upon it. Austro-Russian rivalry in its present acute phase dates from 1908, when the Turkish revolution gave the first sign of the sweeping changes which were to

come, and when Count Aehrenthal seized the moment to annex Bosnia.

It does not appear on the surface why the people of the two empires should have any cause of quarrel, but neither of them is ruled by its people. The two mighty bureaucracies have deepened and accentuated during the last six years the jealousies to which their unnatural frontiers give rise, but it is questionable if they would have gone to war but for the existence in the Balkan peninsula of a state of fluidity and uncertainty which tempted both of them to extend their influence. One might almost picture them as two giants resolved to fight, but groping for each other in the dark. At last they find each other on the battle ground of Serbian nationalism, and the combat begins.

It is important to remember that for the nations of the Balkans the real centre of the war is not on the Aisne, but on the Vistula. They turn their eyes in alternating hope and anxiety towards the Titanic struggle, in point of numbers the greatest battle in history, which is being slowly fought out on the plains of Poland. Even

the military predominance of Germany, though it impresses their imagination, does not make them think of Germany as the leading partner. The Dual Alliance is, for them, "le bloc Austro-Allemand."

The fact that the war originated in the Balkans, and that in one sense we are fighting for Serbia, even when the struggle is waged in far-off Flanders, is not the only point of connection between the Balkans and ourselves. As a military factor the Balkans, represented by Serbia, have detached seven army corps from the Austrian forces for many months, and if the warlike strength of the States were thrown into the scale on our side the whole aspect of the European struggle would be at once changed.

It is not our purpose to discuss the questions—military, economic and political—which centre round the possession of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. It must not be forgotten, however, that these questions are bound up in the Balkan problem, and we shall allude to them in considering the attitude of the various Balkan States.

Finally, since our statesmen have expressed

a wide and generous view of the ultimate object of our intervention in the great war, covering the whole question of the future of the smaller nationalities of Europe, we Englishmen cannot remain indifferent to the effect of our victory or defeat upon the young nations of the peninsula. No people has a greater stake than they have in the issue of the struggle. If we win, it means the possibility of settling the Balkan problem on the basis of nationality, and of building up in that distracted region a permanent fabric of peace.

II.

THE MILITARY STRENGTH OF THE BALKANS.

The immense strength of the Balkan States is but little realised in England. The tenacious and brilliant resistance of Serbia to the Austrian attack is a glowing example of it. A still more vivid example, which is fresh in the memory, is the extraordinarily rapid success of Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece, when in 1912 they destroyed in a few weeks the Turkish Empire in Europe. The latter example is suggestive for the present moment. The forces of the Balkans, if united, are equal to the force of a Great Power. That such a force should not be available for the side of the Triple Entente is nothing less than a disaster. This force has been till now neutralised by internal dissension, but in this there is nothing inevitable. There is no inherent obstacle to securing the co-operation of all the Balkan States with the Triple Entente. The

obstacles which exist are superficial and could be removed by a far-sighted policy.

The forces of the Balkan States, even allowing for the exhaustion of Serbia, represent a total of at least 1,300,000 bayonets. Serbia has certainly 200,000 in the field. Roumania would furnish at least 500,000, Bulgaria 350,000, Greece 250,000.

The numbers, however, of the Balkan armies are not an adequate measure of the strength of the Balkan peoples. They are races of peasants and have the "bon sang" of those who have lived, and whose ancestors have lived, for many generations on the soil. They are accustomed to the hardest life, and their wants are reduced to a point which it is difficult for the Western mind to imagine.

Amid the terrible cold of the Balkan winter many Serbian soldiers have fought without great-coats and even without shoes. The English nurses say that frost-bite has caused more suffering than wounds. The most painful operations are performed without anæsthetics, so great is the endurance of the peasant soldier. The nurses are loud

in praise of the gratitude, gaiety, and lovableness of the Serbian amid horrible sufferings.

The people of the Balkans are not only hardier than others, they are also more indifferent to pain and death. Primitive in their instincts, with a "group consciousness" as strong, perhaps, as that of the consciousness of the individual, they think far less of sacrificing their lives.

A well-known Balkan diplomatist, at the beginning of the first Balkan war, was warned by an Italian statesman that the campaign against the Turks would entail terrible sacrifices, as proved by the experiences of the Italians in Tripoli. "Yes," he replied, "but you must remember that our lives are not as valuable as yours."

The Balkan peoples are, except in Roumania, peasants with holdings of their own, with a consciousness of having something to fall back upon, and a clear sense of the stake they hold in their country. The life of an agricultural people is not subject to the disintegration which war inevitably entails in advanced industrial States. When the

men go to war, the women do the work—something less than the men did, but nevertheless the work of the fields is kept going. In Bulgaria, indeed, it has become a joke that the harvest sown and reaped by the women during the two recent wars was better than the men's. At the worst, even after destruction and devastation, the soil remains, and almost everyone in the country is dependent for his living upon the soil. The fertility of Nature is the one thing that neither fire nor sword can destroy.

The geographical position of the countries, and the nature of their national aspirations, enable them to render military help of a peculiarly valuable kind. The Roumanian army in fighting for Transylvania would either cause the withdrawal of part of the troops opposed to Russia, or would operate against the left flank of the Austrian forces directed towards Serbia, and would completely paralyse the invasion of that country, which may at any time be attempted afresh after the floods of the Save and Danube subside. The Serbian army would be set free to take the offensive, and possibly provoke

an uprising of the Serbian, Croat, and Slovene populations of the Austrian Empire. Any diminution of the Austrian force would compel the Germans to withdraw a larger number of troops from the other theatres of war.

Bulgaria would direct her forces against Turkey, and render the Turkish movements in the Caucasus and in Egypt totally ineffective, by keeping the bulk of the Turkish forces in the West. It has been well said that the defences of Cairo are in Sofia.

The attack of the Allies on the Dardanelles and the Marmora would be powerfully reinforced if a concerted advance were made by Bulgaria in Thrace. With regard to the Greeks, their geographical situation suggests that they should reinforce the depleted Serbian armies; but there are several points on the coast of Asia Minor where they might co-operate directly with the Entente.

The Austrians, Germans, and Turks are fully alive to the vital importance of the Balkans as a military factor. In all the three neutral countries their agents are working with unlimited vigour and with con-

siderable success to persuade both the statesmen and the public of the expediency of joining the Alliance.

They spread news favourable to their cause; they buy up some newspapers, and influence others; they leave no stone unturned to damage the position of those who are opposed to them; they bribe and threaten in every way they can devise the people whose support they covet so keenly.

But there is one point in which they are at a disadvantage as compared with ourselves. They cannot hope to secure the help of a United Balkan Alliance. Serbia and Montenegro are already committed to the side of the Entente; and the utmost to which our opponents can aspire is to neutralise the strength of the Balkans by turning the hand of one or more of the neutral States against its neighbours. It might almost be said that their policy is summed up in the phrase "Discord in the Balkans." We, on the other hand, can hope to obtain the co-operation (if we direct our policy rightly) of every State in the peninsula, and thus promote not only our own immediate success,

but the permanent interests of the Balkan peoples themselves.

It is this fact which justifies, not only from the military, but from other points of view, the desire to add to the forces of the Entente the striking power of Bulgaria, Roumania, and Greece. It is not to be thought of as in the same category with the assistance derived from Japan or from any other Power outside Europe. If a Balkan Alliance were to throw its weight into the scale, it would not be offering its sword in a quarrel with which it had nothing directly to do. It would simply be taking part in a struggle in the issue of which its own interests, its own independence, its own future peace and prosperity, possibly even the continued existence of some of its members, are involved.

III.

RECENT HISTORY.

The present situation in the Balkans can only be understood by reference to their recent history. A series of rapid and dramatic changes have within two years completely altered the relations of the States to one another. The events of these two years throw a flood of light on the possibility of a Balkan Alliance, and on the present grouping of the States.

In the spring of 1912 there occurred the greatest political achievement hitherto effected by the statesmen of the Balkans. M. Venizelos representing Greece, M. Gueshoff representing Bulgaria, and M. Pasich representing Serbia, succeeded in forming a Balkan Alliance for the purpose of destroying the Turkish Empire in Europe. Bitter hostility reigned up to that time between the three States, and it was universally thought that any such combination was hopeless. We may perhaps find a lesson

here for the present crisis. The difficulties were met and overcome, largely owing to the friendly mediation of the veteran correspondent of *The Times*, Mr. Bourchier, without which the authors of the Alliance could not have initiated their pourparlers.

The general idea of the alliance was that Bulgaria should attack the main forces of the Turks, which were, of course, in Thrace, while Serbia and Greece should deal with the Turkish forces in Northern and Southern Macedonia respectively. The lands acquired should be treated as being under a condominium until such time as the Allies should have settled the terms of partition among themselves. A special treaty was made between Bulgaria and Serbia in February, 1912, whereby, among other stipulations, it was agreed that the north-western part of Macedonia should go to Serbia unconditionally, another part to Bulgaria unconditionally, while the zone lying between these two should be submitted to the arbitration of the Czar of Russia. Serbia thus obtained unconditionally Prizrend, Prishtina, and Novi Bazar, Bulgaria Monastir and

Ochrida, while the allotment of Uskub and its neighbourhood remained uncertain.

In the first Balkan war of 1912 the Turkish forces in Europe were completely overwhelmed, the Serbians fighting the decisive battle of Kumanova, the Greeks driving the enemy back towards Salonica, the Bulgarians meeting the main impact of the Ottoman forces and defeating them at Lule Burgas. The advance to Chatalja and the unsuccessful Bulgarian attack will be remembered.

An armistice followed in December, 1912, and a conference was held in London, which proved abortive. Hostilities were resumed. The young Turks brought about the murder of the Commander-in-Chief, Nazim Pasha, and initiated a new policy. Enver Bey landed troops at Gallipoli. The war dragged on; Adrianople at last fell; the Turks submitted, and a treaty was signed in London, under the sanction of the British Government, giving the Bulgarians a frontier from Enos on the Ægean to Midia on the Black Sea

But while the struggle was proceeding be-

tween the Allies on the one hand and Turkey on the other, serious difficulties were arising as to the relations of the Allies themselves.

In December the Serbs reached the Adriatic at Durazzo, but Austria set herself against the occupation of the coast. Later on occurred a second interference by Austria, when she objected to the occupation of Scutari by Montenegro (equally with Serbia the representative of the Serbian race) after a successful siege.

Austria intimated to the Powers, who were now in conference, through their ambassadors in London, that she could not tolerate the appearance of Serbia on the Adriatic, and that she desired the creation of an independent Albania, which would, of course, imply the blocking of Serbia's path. The seeds of discord were now sown, Serbia declaring that Bulgaria did not adequately support her in resisting the Austrian demand.

Driven back from their main objective, the Serbians felt themselves impelled to claim more territory than they had intended in Macedonia. Alleging that the circum-

stances had changed since the conclusion of their treaty with Bulgaria, they refused to carry out its provisions.

The representatives of the Balkan States having met for the second time in London for the conclusion of peace between the Allies and Turkey, it now became clear that Serbia claimed to repudiate her treaty with Bulgaria. Her point of view was that this treaty had been based on the underlying assumption of her expansion to the Adriatic, although it was admitted that there had been no mention of this assumption in the terms of the treaty itself. Bulgaria naturally adhered to the terms of the treaty, and the foundations of the alliance were shaken.

Serbia was only willing to meet Bulgaria's wishes to this extent, that she declared herself ready to accept arbitration, not in the form stipulated by the treaty, but "au large," as it was called, *i.e.*, dealing with the allocation of territory on the basis of the clean slate, without regard to previous engagements. Russia, instead of stating her adhesion to the treaty, gave the impression

that she was prepared to accept Serbia's view and support Serbia's cause. All materials for strife were now at hand, and on both sides an armed conflict was anticipated. Russia invited the parties to Petrograd; Serbia accepted, but Bulgaria hesitated, desiring to lay down new conditions as to the limits of arbitration.

The events of this fateful month of June, 1913, the subject of so much passionate discussion, are not yet perfectly clear. The Bulgarian Premier, it seems, was prepared to go to Petrograd, but there was a party in the cabinet which held that the right of Bulgaria had been plainly infringed, and that she ought to insist on the letter of her bond. In the midst of these uncertainties Bulgaria suddenly put herself in the wrong by opening hostilities with a declaration of war against both Serbia and Greece. Both these States had entrenched themselves strongly on the frontiers of the territory Bulgaria had occupied during the war. Both anticipated a conflict. Whether the King or General Savoff was the more responsible for the Bulgarian attack is still unknown. It is

certain that it was not sanctioned by the cabinet or by public opinion.

The second Balkan war followed. The Bulgarians soon found themselves invaded not on two frontiers but on four. While they were being driven back by the Serbs and Greeks, the Turks decided to repudiate the Treaty of London, re-took Adrianople, and advanced as far as the old Bulgarian frontier. Finally, Roumania, acting in concert with Serbia and Greece, seized the opportunity to enter the territory of her hard-pressed neighbour, advanced to within a few miles of Sofia, and without the necessity of striking a blow annexed a large slice of further territory in the Dobruja.

Both these invasions were in contravention of recent treaties. The Protocol of Petrograd, arranged under Russian auspices early in 1913, had definitely settled the claims of Roumania in the Dobruja. The Treaty of London, made between the Allies and the Turks after the fall of Adrianople, had given to Bulgaria the frontier running from Enos to Midia. It was concluded under British auspices, and the Bulgarian Government

regarded it as being secured by the special patronage of the Powers.

The three Powers who had gained so much at Bulgaria's expense were in a position to impose their own terms in the negotiations which followed at Bucarest. A treaty was signed there in August. Serbia acquired a large district, which was Bulgarian in its sympathies. Greece, by annexing Kavalla, cut off Bulgaria from her natural economic outlet to the Ægean. Roumania remained undisturbed in the regions which her troops had occupied.

The Treaty of London, in spite of the belief held by Bulgaria that she might regard it as an instrument guaranteed by the Great Powers, and on which she could therefore depend, was allowed to be infringed, with nothing more than verbal protest on the part of England. The Bulgarians were told that they must negotiate again with Turkey, and by the Treaty of Constantinople (August, 1913) they ceded back to Turkey more than half the territory which they had acquired.

Turkey, by regaining Adrianople, placed

herself across the only line of railway which connects the Ægean with Bulgaria.

Bulgaria, unable to resist, acquiesced sullenly in these unnatural arrangements, the crude outcome of naked force. Careful observers saw, in the allocation to Serbia of South-Eastern Macedonia, the creation of a new Alsace-Lorraine, destined, so long as it remained, to render peace impossible.

A few words will suffice to describe the state of affairs which has existed in the Balkans since the stirring events above described. Roumania, Serbia, and Greece, deeply impressed, as they had been, by the danger of a Bulgarian hegemony in the Balkans, remained informally allied with a view to preserving what is generally known in the Balkans as the principle of equilibrium, and Serbia and Greece made a more definite compact by which they engaged themselves to protect each other against Bulgarian attack.

But in the newly acquired territories the process of "nationalisation," now so familiar in the Balkans, has been taken in hand. It consists in the endeavour to produce, as

rapidly as possible, an unreal impression of uniformity by the crude process of suppressing schools, churches, and newspapers, changing names, and penalising the use of languages. But the situation has not in it the elements of permanence.

The plain facts have begun to make themselves felt. The great war has altered the situation, in some respects for the better. In view of the probable expansion of Serbia, Roumania, and Greece, the principle of equilibrium is viewed in a different light. The Treaty of Bucarest, except perhaps in Greece, is no longer regarded as sacrosanct. Its principal author, Roumania, has already made it clear that she regards it as superseded.

IV.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS.

Serbia, Roumania, and the rest are to most of us mere names. If we are to grapple with the problem of the Balkans we must form some conception of the characteristics which distinguish Balkan nations from those of the West. We in England have studied these remarkable peoples far too little. Our interest in them would be quickened if we could present to ourselves a more vivid picture of the way in which they live and strive.

In all the Balkan lands alike the people have qualities which greatly attract the traveller. They have the virtues of a civilisation more primitive than our own. They are virile, direct, simple, hospitable. They all appreciate in an almost exaggerated degree the interest taken in them by citizens of the Western countries, who thus may have the satisfaction of feeling that even by small

services and slight attention they can render them appreciable help.

These people busy themselves about serious things, about real life. Everyone is a politician and no one is ashamed of "talking shop." Luxury is the exception. The hauteur of conscious dignity is happily absent, even among men who are born leaders of their fellows. A single village street has in it more picturesqueness of clothes and houses than can be found in the whole of industrial England. It is not merely the sparkling climate, the beautiful monasteries, the mountain and lake scenery, which so few European eyes have seen, that constitute the attraction of the Balkans. It is the fact that these are rising peoples, that all eyes are on a future which holds in its bosom perhaps great and notable things, destined to fill new pages in the book of history.

They are for the most part democratic nations, in which democracy is based on the ownership of the land in small peasant properties. This result is partly due, strange as it may seem, to Turkish imperialism, which swept away the native ruling classes,

and substituted foreign landlords and potentates. These in their turn were driven out or expropriated when the Turkish dominion fell.

In curious contrast with the democratic structure of society are the reigning houses of the Balkans, which, with the exception of the Serbian and Montenegrin dynasties, are of alien extraction. They have been placed in their strange and uncomfortable position because it was felt that monarchy was needed to produce cohesion, and because no native sovereign could be found. Rulers like King Charles of Roumania have rendered immense services to their people, but there is always the possibility of a cleavage in point of sympathy and interest between them and their subjects, and at times grave errors have been made which have been unjustly supposed to reflect discredit on the national character.

The most momentous of the factors common to all the Balkan States is that each of them represents but a part of the population which bears its name and shares its aspirations. Outside the border of each is a region which, in the phrase consecrated by

Italian usage, is "irredenta," unredeemed. The State itself, carved out of the Turkish Empire with infinite difficulty and with the shedding of much blood, regards itself as being but a nucleus of the true nation, which will one day be found united under one flag. The study of ethnography has become a universal passion, and the map on the walls of the school-house, setting forth the actual frontier in one colour and the ideal frontier in another, becomes for the rising youth of the nation a symbol of its ideal and its destiny.

SERBIA

V.

SERBIA.

It is not many weeks since we were present at a meeting of the Serbian Parliament or Skupshtina. Belgrade, the capital, having been evacuated, the centre of government was at Nish, a little provincial town of 25,000 inhabitants, its population then swollen by soldiers, prisoners, wounded men and refugees to over 100,000. Even a Parliament must not be particular about its meeting place under such conditions. The Skupshtina met in a concert hall attached to a café. The deputies sat close together on rows of small wicker chairs facing the president. On his right along the wall sat the eight members of the new Cabinet which had just been formed, with a green baize table before them lit by two candles. The Government represented a coalition of all parties, symbolising the unity which prevailed in the political world.

The sitting was held to hear the declaration of the new Government, but the first words were spoken by a leading deputy, who rose to condole with the president on the loss of his son, whose death in battle had just been reported. M. Pasich, the premier, and the most commanding figure in Serbian politics, then rose. He is a man who, beginning his career as an engineer, early abandoned engineering for politics, and has devoted himself to them without any distracting interests outside the political world. Under the Austrophil régime of King Milan he was arrested and condemned for taking part in anti-Austrian intrigues. He stands to-day head and shoulders above every other Serbian politician. His long grey beard and somewhat threadbare frock coat made him a striking figure as he stood and read by the dim candle light his momentous declaration. The core of it was the recurring statement that Serbia was fighting not only for the Serbs, but for the Croats and the Slovenes also. Serbia, in a word, stood forth for the first time distinctly and without equivocation as the champion not

merely of the Greater Serbia but of the Southern Slavs as a whole, or, as the phrase is, "Ugoslavia." By this term is meant Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia, and the Slovene districts of the Austrian provinces.

In the days before the war there were many who thought that the destiny of Ugoslavia was to become a third great kingdom side by side with Austria and Hungary within an Austro-Hungaro-Slav Empire. Its adherents were divided on the question whether to fix their eyes on Vienna or Belgrade. But with the murder of the Archduke and the coming of the great war the dream of Trialism, as it was called, has gone for ever. It was a policy which might have grown out of peace; it is not one which could emerge from war. Henceforth the hopes and aspirations of Ugoslavia centre round the oriflamme of King Peter's dynasty. Serbia stands in the same relation to her fellow-nationals as Piedmont stood to Italy in the days when Italy was divided between the Austrians, the Pope, and the King of Naples. King Peter may be des-

tined to be the Victor Emanuel and M. Pasich the Cavour.

In the economic sphere the main question for Serbia for years past has been to find an outlet to the sea. "Can you imagine what it is like," said a prominent official to us, "to have no outlet on the sea?" Surrounded on all hands by neighbours who might at any moment block her commerce, she has turned desperately in one direction or another, now towards the Adriatic, now towards Salonica and the Ægean, now towards a commercial arrangement with Austria. Till 1908, having no neighbour except Austria with any appreciable trade, she was treated by Austria as a commercial vassal. Whenever her great neighbour wished to apply commercial or even political pressure, it was her traditional habit to declare that Serbian pigs (the only large Serbian export) were infected with swine-fever. Such was Serbia's humiliating geographical position that she felt she could only sit down tamely under this system of "Schwein feber-politik." But in 1908 M. Pasich conceived the daring plan of

an arrangement with Turkey, to export through Salonica, and to the astonishment of the world he succeeded.

Of all the countries in the Balkans, Serbia has had the largest share of fighting, yet in actual territory up to 1913 she had gained the least.

She has characteristics which make her not unworthy of the high destiny to which she aspires. Her people are a race of fighters. They have fought more than any other Balkan people. They fought the Turks in 1806, 1876, 1877 and 1912, Bulgaria in 1885 and 1913, and now the most powerful antagonist she has ever confronted. In the army which has driven Austria back is a man who is now fighting in his sixth war.

The present war has proved more strikingly than ever the brilliant military quality of the Serbs ; they are not the less redoubtable in the field because they are deeply sentimental and devoted to poetry and art. Their national songs, or rather epics, pieced together by wandering bards and handed down by oral tradition, are part of the education of every child. Their character

resembles the Russian in many respects. They have the dreaminess of the Slav, his mercurial changes of feeling, his childlike devotion to the Church and its ceremonies, its light and colour, its consolations; but they are conscious of a marked difference, and while feeling a deep sympathy with their fellow Slavs, they set their faces towards the West, send their young men to study at Paris, and claim for themselves a civilisation more practical and more progressive.

The force which has supported them in their gigantic efforts has been their peasant life, founded upon the soil and on a wide distribution of property. Their policy is genuinely democratic. And their dynasty, unlike that of every other Balkan State except Montenegro, is a native one. The family of the Karageorges does not derive its claim from ancient descent, but from the fact that the first Karageorge, grandfather of the present King, a simple swineherd, raised the national standard and defeated the Turks.

The reputation of the country has greatly suffered in the past through the murder

of the Obrenovich King and Queen. Though the manner of that regicide cannot be excused, yet it is idle to ignore the fact that the extirpation of the dynasty was but the symbol of a great national revolt against the policy of subjection to Austria for which that dynasty stood. It has, as a matter of fact, been followed by a remarkable revival, extending not only to the material progress, but also to the morale of the nation. The regicide policy was brutal, but it was a desperate struggle for life, and the nation breathed freely when it was done.

The Serbian State rests, then, on a firm basis, socially, politically, and economically. Its only weakness is the essay in imperialism into which it has been unfortunately led in South-Eastern Macedonia. The second Balkan war endowed it with a territory whose people are unsympathetic towards its rule. This is a situation which Serbian political life is not adapted to meet, for in the Balkans the long centuries of Turkish oppression have resulted in a type of nationalism which regards intolerance

towards other nationalities as a condition of its own strength.

Few who know the situation can doubt that in the ultimate settlement this territory, including Monastir and Ochrida, will be transferred to Bulgaria, and that Serbia will be left free to build up a true Serbian democracy in the wide lands inhabited by her own people.

ROUMANIA

VI.

ROUMANIA.

THERE are few stranger phenomena in the history of races than Roumania. For reasons which are still obscure the Latin tongue and something of the Latin characteristics have survived here, on the soil of the old Roman province of Dacia, while they have been totally extinguished in regions much nearer to the centre of the empire, including the whole of the Balkan peninsula. The little Latin enclave has been surrounded for centuries by peoples more powerful than its own. One after another the Slavs, the Poles, the Magyars, the Tartars, and the Turks have fought over it. The result of these invasions is shown in the fact that the purest Roumanian stock is found along the Carpathian range, whether on the Roumanian or Hungarian side. It was in the mountains that the Latins could escape most easily from the influence of the invaders. Alien rulers have come and gone, and for centuries the language fell into disuse among the

upper classes of the country. But it survived on the lips of the peasant, and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have seen a revival which has placed it in a secure position, and made it the vehicle of much genuine literature.

The Turkish invaders did not govern the country directly from Constantinople. They exacted tribute, but left the administration in the hands of local princes, at one time Roumanian, at another Greek. There is still a plentiful infusion of Greek blood among the upper classes. One important result of this Turkish system of government is that a distinct ruling class still exists. The old ruling class, not being Turk, was not driven out when Turkish rule came to an end, as was the case in the other States. Hence Roumania is not a democracy. The peasants, a light-hearted and clever race, have the slenderest interest in the soil. The land is owned by great proprietors. It is extremely rich, but the greater part of the value which it annually produces goes into the pockets, not of those who till it, but of wealthy men who spend it freely at Bucarest or Paris.

The peasants are universally poor. Their discontent broke out a few years ago in a violent revolutionary movement, in which something like ten thousand were shot down by the troops. The distribution of wealth is extremely unequal. In the capital the most magnificent private houses are found side by side with a slumdom, and a degree of abject poverty, unknown in Sofia, Belgrade, or Athens.

The suffrage is a very narrow one. Public opinion does not count for much in shaping the policy of Roumania, which is conducted in the main by small groups of politicians.

A still more potent influence in guiding the affairs of the country was the late King Charles, who came to the throne in 1866 as Prince, when the country consisted of two undeveloped and little known principalities.

It is to his personal influence and indefatigable industry, in promoting its internal organisation and its economic development, that it owes the recognition now accorded to it as a civilised State.

Roumania has acquired a new interest for Englishmen from the fact that its present

Queen is of English birth. Queen Marie is, perhaps, the most remarkable English personality in the Balkans. Notable for her intellectual and artistic gifts, as well as for commanding beauty, she is likely, so Roumanians think, to play a by no means negligible part in the history of the next few years.

The national aspirations of Roumania are turned partly towards Bessarabia, the province taken from her by Russia in 1878, but still more towards the West, towards the three million Roumanians inhabiting Transylvania, which forms the South-Eastern corner of Hungary. This population is deprived by the Hungarian Government of every possible means of political self-expression, but there is evidence that it regards the great war as the means of its deliverance from the Magyar yoke, and is looking anxiously across the Carpathians for the coming of the Roumanian army.

The Roumanian populace is for war, and street meetings and other demonstrations are frequent in Bucarest. But it is easy to exaggerate the influence which these demon-

strations exercise upon the Government. There are powerful personalities, above all M. Take Jonesco, who are convinced that the true interest of the country lies in taking part in the war on the side of the Triple Entente, and that the present crisis offers the greatest opportunity which has yet presented itself in Roumanian history of realising the dream of a united Roumanian race. On the other hand, the sympathies of the present King, a member of the Hohenzollern family, are naturally German, and the treaty of alliance with Austria, effected by his late uncle, still exists, though it is popularly regarded as obsolete.

Further, there are many politicians who feel that by judicious waiting Roumania may be able to repeat the experience of last year, when she gained a considerable accession of territory by a bloodless occupation. Lastly, there has been during the war an abnormally profitable commerce with Austria and Germany, and powerful vested interests have operated against the policy of action. Even to-day it is doubted whether the claim of the Government that

it has stopped the exportation of corn and of petrol can be wholly substantiated.

The question of the Dardanelles is one which profoundly interests Roumania. Since her economic position can always be attacked by the closing of the Straits, political as well as economic pressure can by this means be brought to bear. At present her sole access to the Mediterranean is by land, through countries in which the facilities for transport are expensive, and may break down. She is acutely conscious of this perilous position, to which she, alone of the Balkan States, is exposed.

We have already pointed out the immense assistance which Roumania could render to the Triple Entente if she invaded Hungary. She has been hitherto deterred from doing so, not only by the reasons given above, but also by the fear that, if she did so, she might be attacked by Bulgaria in the rear. This has been used as a pretext even by those who had, in fact, other reasons for opposing the war policy. Roumanian action has been held up by the absence of any arrangement with Bulgaria, either on her

part or on the part of the Entente. So far as she is concerned, she would, unlike Greece welcome such an arrangement. She does not forget that there was once a Bulgar-Roumanian empire, and some of her leading statesmen openly assert their willingness to make certain territorial concessions. They realise that the interest of the two countries may draw them together in common resistance to pressure from without the peninsula.

Roumanian statesmen take a large view of the future of the Balkans. They are attracted by the idea of promoting Balkan unity. The one Balkan journal which consistently advocates such unity, and addresses itself to the Balkan public in general, viz., the *Journal des Balkans*, is published in Bucarest. The Roumanian Government recognises that the Treaty of Bucarest must be superseded by new arrangements. They are only concerned to maintain what they describe as the principle of equilibrium, the substantial meaning of which is that no one Power shall be allowed to grow so strong as to dominate the rest.

GREECE

VII.

GREECE.

The Balkan State which has hitherto aroused the largest amount of interest in England is Greece. Many people who have formed no clear conception of the other States are well acquainted with the little kingdom which occupies the territory of ancient Hellas. Our customary classical education, however little it may have left with us, has made the mountains and rivers and cities of Greece familiar words.

Englishmen were deeply moved by the struggles of Greece in the wars of liberation, and the great blow which sealed the success of those struggles was struck at the battle of Navarino in 1827, when the three Powers who now form the Triple Entente destroyed the naval power of the Turkish Empire.

A national bond of sympathy between England and Greece is found in the fact that both peoples are maritime and com-

mercial, regarding the sea as their normal highway, and trade as their principal source of wealth. As the result of these characteristics the Greek race has become distributed throughout the world, and in particular has maintained far closer and more constant relations with Western Europe than the Slav States or Roumania.

There is a Greek colony in every important centre of civilisation, and the opportunity of cultivating good relations has not been missed. The Greeks are not only a clever, but an attractive and winning people; they have always excelled in diplomacy, and in the power of influencing the public opinion of other countries.

Until the last few years, the reputation of Greece has suffered from her financial troubles (which led to the Commission of Control of representatives of the Powers) and from the defects of administration which were brought to light by the disasters of the war with Turkey in 1897. The impression prevailed that, in spite of the personal qualities of the people, the State itself was destined to be a weak one. The Greeks

themselves realised the existence of this impression, and their salvation has been found in the fact that they have firmly resolved to remove the causes of it. The internal troubles which led up to the revolt of the navy and army in 1909 were the growing-pains of a people determined to shake themselves free from corruption in politics and inefficiency in Government. A violent interruption of the normal and legal course of political life, a coup d'état, the dissolution of Parliament, and the summoning of the National Assembly, seems to have acted as a salutary shock to the whole nation. The men who made the revolution were wise enough not to prolong military rule after it had ceased to be necessary. They re-established the civil power, and they were fortunate enough to find ready to their hand a politician whose name has become the symbol of the remarkable revival of the past five years. M. Venizelos had passed through a stormy apprenticeship in that mixture of politics and guerilla warfare which used to constitute the public life of Crete. He is a man of direct and

straightforward ways, charming all who meet him by his unaffected manners and his peculiarly friendly smile. At the same time, his conduct of the affairs of his country throughout the difficult and constantly changing circumstances of the past five years has proved that he is far-sighted, cool, and capable of rapid decisions. In private life he is distinguished by a complete absence of pretentiousness and display. His devotion to politics is such that it admits of no rival interest or pastime.

The revival which M. Venizelos has personified and led constitutes an epoch in the life of modern Greece. It has not only taken the form of material improvement in the army and navy, but has affected the whole atmosphere of political life, and even of public opinion outside political circles. The use of public positions for amassing private gains is frowned upon. The fury of meaningless partisanship has been quelled. Till the recent crisis and the resignation of M. Venizelos almost complete unity prevailed, and there were signs that when new lines of cleavage occurred they would be

dictated by real differences and not by personal ambitions. M. Venizelos set his face against the spoils system, which, though too deeply engrained to be wholly removed, seemed likely to yield to the accumulating force of public censure.

The most striking result of the revival is the disappearance of the old habit of talking grandiloquently about the Great Hellas, destined to revive and surpass the glories of the Byzantine Empire. A reaction has taken place, and it is the custom to talk to-day of the expansion of Greece with far greater moderation and reserve. In this, and other political matters, a practical spirit prevails, especially among the younger men, which is likely to be a source of strength to the country in the future.

The foreign outlook of Greece is largely influenced by the vast and sudden expansion which has fallen to her lot owing to the events of 1912 and 1913. There is a feeling that she has acquired as much as she can deal with for the present.

The principal factor in her foreign outlook is her jealousy and fear of Bulgaria. With

Serbia she is allied, and she considers that this friendship is likely to last at least for some years. She is rendering valuable help to Serbia by giving her every facility for the transport of war material through Salonica. She has never felt towards Serbia the deeply engrained hostility that she feels for Bulgaria. The King's war medal, on which the title of one of the Byzantine emperors, Bulgarochthonos (slayer of the Bulgarians), was reproduced, illustrates the existence of an unfortunate sentiment, strong enough to obscure the sense of what is appropriate to the taste of the twentieth century.

What keeps alive this sentiment is the fear that the Bulgarian State may continue to surpass the Greek State in numbers, and may even become relatively stronger, and that this constitutes a grave military danger, especially to Salonica. This question of numbers is at the root of the objection which the Greeks feel to the cession of any territory by Serbia to Bulgaria.

If this accession of strength to Bulgaria were to be counter-balanced by the addition to Greece of her population in Asia

Minor, it would be received in quite a different light. The sense of ever-present danger would then be removed.

The real centre of gravity of the Great Hellas is not the bare mountains of the Southern Balkans, but the waters and islands of the Ægean Sea.

This long-standing problem of Greek expansion, to which so much thought and aspiration have been directed in the past, has now become an urgent and burning question in consequence of the attack by the Allied fleet on the Dardanelles and Smyrna. It is probable that the Triple Entente Powers will shortly hold in their hands the key to the solution of the Balkan entanglement so far as Greece is concerned. They have it in their power to satisfy finally and completely the national aspirations of the Hellenic race by including a portion of Asia Minor in the Kingdom of Greece. In doing so they should not fail to insist upon one important condition. That condition is that Greece on her part should contribute to the success of their general policy. She should enable them to satisfy those Bulgarian claims

within the Balkan peninsula which are essential to her national life, and which must be satisfied before Bulgarian adhesion to the Entente can be secured and permanent peace in the Balkans can be established. The fall of M. Venizelos in March, 1915, was a grave disappointment to those who hoped, and hoped with reason, that Greece would seize the unrivalled opportunity that was then presented to her of realising her national claims.

BULGARIA

VIII.

BULGARIA.

Bulgaria is strongly condemned by the greater part of the Slav world, because she does not join in the struggle for Slavism. So deep is this feeling that she has been described by a Roumanian writer, in a much-quoted phrase, as "The Judas of the Slav race." Bulgarians are but little moved by these violent attacks. For them it is not a question of the cause of Slavism against the cause of Teutonism. It is a question of obtaining for Bulgaria certain specific towns and villages inhabited by men who sympathise with her national ideal.

The Bulgars are practical and positive. This characteristic exhibits itself even in their manner of speaking. Unlike their neighbours, they are accustomed to use enough words to explain their meaning and no more. They are accused of excessive reserve, but this is a trait which makes them congenial to many Englishmen.

They are the workers of the Balkans. English contractors, who have employed men of many races, find that the Bulgarians are the only people whom they can get to work in a gang by themselves, without supervision, and trust to their plodding on all day.

The progress which the Bulgarians have made since the creation of their State in 1878 is merely a symbol, and an instalment, of the aim which they have constantly set before themselves—the building up of an economic fabric based on firm foundations and complete at every point, dominated by finance in its most modern form, and strengthened and buttressed by universal education. They are, in a sense, the Scotchmen of the Balkans.

Their political outlook is definite. The aim which surpasses all others in intensity is the union of their race under the Bulgarian flag. Bulgarians being considerably fewer than either Greeks, Serbs, or Roumanians, the realisation of this aim is for them a matter of life and death.

The traditional claim of Bulgaria is to the boundaries laid down by Russia after the

Russo-Turkish War, in the Treaty of San Stefano. In recent years the ambitions and expectations of the people have been narrowed down to much smaller limits. The practical claims of to-day are to certain portions of territory of which Bulgaria considers herself to have been robbed in the second Balkan War. These comprise, first and foremost, the part of what is now Serbian Macedonia which was allotted unconditionally to Bulgaria by the Treaty of Alliance between herself and Serbia in February, 1912; next, the great trade route to the Ægean, leading down the Struma Valley, and debouching at Kavala; next, the Southern Dobruja, the strip of Bulgarian territory by the mouths of the Danube, which was included in the Roumanian annexation of 1913; finally, Thrace, which was the scene of their victories against the Turks and of the dream of Byzantine Imperialism. Thrace, however, makes a far less powerful appeal now than it did two years ago, since it does not involve the question of bringing new Bulgarian citizens within the kingdom.

It is difficult for outsiders to realise the

sense of injustice, the pervading suspicions, with which the political atmosphere is charged since the events of 1913. We have discussed in a previous article how far the Bulgarian Government was itself responsible for those events. For the moment it is enough to recall the fact that the treaty with Serbia, the treaty with Roumania, and the treaty with Turkey, in spite of the moral sanction given to them by the Great Powers, were one and all contravened; that the immense sacrifices made in the first war resulted in gains altogether disproportionate to the hopes which the nation had formed.

The wonder is that the débâcle of 1913 did not lead to internal violence and revolution. It has left behind it, not rage and hopelessness, but merely an abiding sense of soreness and distrust, combined with a determination to begin building immediately on the ruins of the past and preparing for a better future. The economic revival since the war is typified by the striking fact that the deposits in the local savings banks during the last two years have been greater than at any previous period.

It is easy in the light of these things to understand why Bulgaria has wavered and hesitated as to the side which she ought to take in the European struggle. It is a question of risks and possibilities and promises, and she has been driven back to the idea that birds in the bush are valueless, that only the bird in the hand is worth any sacrifice. The Triple Entente for her means Russia more than anything else. And though she can never forget that Russia was her deliverer from the Turk, the memory of what she conceives to have been Russia's betrayal of her in 1913 is fresher in the minds of the politicians. Every promise is suspected to a degree which makes inroads even upon her wonted reasonableness. Further, her position makes her peculiarly susceptible to the tempting offers which the German-Austrian-Turkish Alliance presses upon her with unflagging energy. The Dual Alliance has nothing to offer to Greece and very little to Roumania, but, as regards Bulgaria, her geographical situation makes it worth Austria's while to court her.

She is at present hostile to Serbia. Austria

is Serbia's enemy, and, if successful, would be glad enough, she thinks, to gratify her territorial ambitions at Serbia's expense.

To join the Entente is thought to be risky. The Austrian troops are near, and Austria's ally, Turkey, has a great army on the Eastern frontier. Her statesmen do not deny that her Macedonian aspirations are in conflict with Austria's dream of access to the Ægean and of a co-terminous frontier with Turkey, but Austria's dream may not be realisable. Against the acceptance of promises from the Entente Bulgarians have been in the habit of pointing to the untrustworthiness of all diplomatic engagements.

Yet it would be wrong to convey the impression that Bulgaria cannot be won, and that Balkan unity is a chimera. The King, the present Government, and the official Press do not represent Bulgaria as a whole. The Government has a majority of less than 15, and is threatened by the defection of its most powerful supporter, M. Gennadieff. The most weighty political personalities are to be found not in the ranks

of the Government but in the solid Opposition bloc, which advocates adhesion to the side of the Triple Entente. M. Gueshoff, who presides over this powerful combination, is a statesman of the first rank, and one of the principal authors of the Balkan Alliance of 1912. It is thought that a younger leader, M. Malinoff, who has already held the premiership, would be called to form a Cabinet if a change were made. He is not only strongly attached to the Liberal Powers; he is a man of character, typically Bulgarian in his sobriety of thought and reserve of expression, combined with energy and deep feeling. Behind these men lie the fundamental conceptions and attachments of a people passionately interested in national affairs and capable of controlling the policy of the Government. Gratitude to Russia as the saviour of the country is ineradicable among the peasants, whose fathers fought alongside the Russian armies in 1877. The national memory takes a concrete form in the sculptured figures of the Bulgarian peasants, mingled with the Russian soldiery, on the base of the great

statue of the Czar-Liberator, which occupies the most commanding place in Sofia.

Finally, there is the widespread feeling for England, a Power which is respected because her Balkan policy is not guided by interested motives alone, and is loved for her defence of Bulgaria at critical moments of the country's history.

The Bulgarian question sprang into sudden prominence when the Allies attacked the Straits. It became a matter of urgent importance that Bulgaria's adhesion should be obtained.

MACEDONIA

IX.

MACEDONIA.

The attack on Serbia, out of which the present war originated, could hardly have been made if the long standing and dangerous problem of Macedonia had not lain in the background. The intense passions concentrated on that unhappy region made it impossible for the States concerned in its liberation to avoid a conflict as to the partition of its territory. The result was the second Balkan war and the destruction of the Balkan Alliance. Had the Alliance subsisted, the insulting ultimatum of Austria would never have been despatched to Belgrade in July, 1914.

In the days when the partition of Macedonia seemed impossible owing to the mutual hostility of the neighbouring States, the friends of Macedonia advocated the creation of an autonomous province under European control. That solution has gone by the board for ever. The Macedonian question

can no longer be treated by itself. It has been merged in the wider question of the relations of Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece, and those relations can never be put on a firm basis until the partition has been so arranged that the wishes of the people themselves, subject, of course, to the necessary give and take which the mixture of population requires, are met and satisfied.

The Treaty of San Stefano, imposed by Russia upon Turkey after the war of 1877, gave the greater part of Macedonia to Bulgaria, including large areas now allotted to Greece and Serbia. No one now expects that this frontier, which represents the full Bulgarian claim, will ever be allowed. Between Greece and Bulgaria a certain rough balance of population has been established by the recent arrangements. If there are great numbers of Greeks in Bulgaria, there is a great Bulgarian population under the Greek flag. The question between Greece and Bulgaria is not so much a question of population as a question of the economic necessities of Bulgaria and the natural *amour propre* of Greece.

As regards the district acquired by Serbia, on the other hand, the question of the population is still a burning one. We shall limit ourselves here to the territory which under the treaty between Serbia and Bulgaria made before the Balkan war, in February, 1912, was allotted to Bulgaria unconditionally. As opposed to the district left subject to arbitration, it is known, for the sake of simplicity, as the undisputed zone. It does not include Uskub, but comprises the district between the present southern Serbian frontier and the line drawn from near Kustendjil to Monastir and Ochrida.

The Serbian description of this country is that it is inhabited by Slavs, who are neither Serbs nor Bulgarians, but who might be turned into either by various propagandist processes. They are described as flour which could be made up to order into bread, cakes, or biscuits. Much learning has been expended on the question of the race to which they belong. Neither the question of race, however, nor the closely allied question of language, is the real test. The real test is the desire of the people to be united to

one State or the other: it is a question of their sympathies, whether political or ecclesiastical. On this point there is no doubt in the minds of those who have studied the country impartially. The sympathies of the majority, and in particular of the men who count as leaders of local opinion, the schoolmasters, the priests and the notables, are Bulgarian. It may be, as Greeks and Serbs contend, that this result has been produced by assiduous propaganda and the liberal expenditure of money on schools, churches and revolutionary bands. The fact remains that it has in fact been produced, and that Bulgarian sympathies have taken such deep root that they could not be eradicated by anything short of a long period of violent persecution.

Looking to the interests of peace in the future, it seems certain that those interests cannot be secured so long as the claims of Bulgaria in Serbian Macedonia remain entirely unsatisfied; Bulgaria will always have the means of creating a movement in her favour.

It is contended that the Bulgarian senti-

ment of the Macedonian population can be made to give way to another national sentiment in a short time. Our study of Macedonia during fifteen years past convinces us that this is untrue. It is a question not of blood or language, but of political and ecclesiastical sympathies. A conspicuous proof of this lies in the fact that the violent persecution carried on by Greeks and Serbs with Turkish help between 1903 and 1908 did not avail to alter the sympathies of the peasants. Another proof is that the Bulgarians have always been ready to accept the creation of an autonomous Macedonia, confident that if the wishes of the people were consulted the government would be Bulgarian.

There is no Serbian movement in Macedonia corresponding in intensity or in persistence with the Bulgarian Exarchist movement. It has led numbers of Bulgarians of property and influence in Macedonia to sacrifice their position, endure long imprisonment, or devote their lives to organisation in comparative poverty.

In regard to Serbian Macedonia, Serbian

officials admit that they have had the greatest difficulty in securing recruits and in staffing the schools, the great majority of which were previously staffed by Bulgarians. The widespread maladministration of the Serbian officials which comes to the notice of the British and Russian consuls arises in the main from the disaffection of the population.

It may be also pointed out that to leave Macedonia under a rule which does not represent the wishes of the majority of the people is inconsistent with the declared intentions of the British Government in regard to the principle of nationality. The above views are confirmed by the exodus of a large part of the Macedonian population into Bulgaria.

The principal difference between the representatives of the Bulgarian movement in Macedonia and those of the Serbian and Greek movements has been, that while the latter came from Greece or Serbia to spread the influence of their fatherland, the former were natives of the soil.

It would be wrong to blame the Serbians overmuch for the imperialist adventure into

which they have been led in the south-east corner of their kingdom, otherwise so ideally democratic. Circumstances have been too strong for them. It has been their misfortune rather than their fault, and they have paid for it already in a certain weakening and distraction of their forces. We travelled recently through the country with Serbian friends who faced the situation frankly. The admission is freely made that great difficulty has been experienced in the matter of recruiting. In one town the prefect said that 20 per cent. of the men under obligation to serve had fled the place. In others a great exodus of the population across the frontier was admitted. We were introduced to leading men who were working for the Serbian Government, but who complained of the excessive war levy imposed upon their town, partly on the ground of the exodus above referred to. A chief inspector of schools described the difficulties he had incurred. The schools were all Bulgarian, and many of the school-masters had fled. Those that remained could not speak the Serbian language or

teach Serbian history, and a three months' course in these subjects was arranged at Belgrade, to enable them to bring up the Macedonian youths as Serbs.

Complaints in regard to grave defects of administration are not to be wondered at. They are perfectly natural features under a Government which finds itself placed among an unsympathetic population.

The effect upon Bulgaria is to increase the movement, already strong, for uniting Bulgarian Macedonia with the kingdom. With such a population on its borders, with great numbers of Macedonians resident in Bulgaria itself (the population of Sofia is largely Macedonian), there has been created in the kingdom a Macedonian movement which is based on a deep underlying sense of national sympathy; which looks upon all the nation's sacrifices as having been made for the sake of Macedonia; which is determined to keep the Macedonian question to the front, and which exercises a powerful influence in politics. From the point of view of conciliating Bulgaria, it is essential to take account of this movement.

The immediate military consequences of not conciliating Bulgaria are obvious. What we are concerned to point out is that the concession of territory by Serbia to Bulgaria, which Serbia has already accepted in principle, is founded in justice as well as in expediency.

In promoting such a concession the Entente will be acting upon the principle which our Government has defined as one of the main objects for which we are fighting—the principle that each nationality has the right to live united and free.

X.

THE FUTURE.

We have hitherto looked at the Balkan problem mainly from the point of view of the immediate necessities of the great war. But if the great war is to end, not in a temporary triumph, but in a resettlement of Europe upon more solid foundations, then it is necessary for the peoples of Europe to look further into the future, and to ensure that the materials for future conflict are not allowed to remain in existence after the terms of peace have been imposed.

The fact which has made the Balkan peninsula the ground of incessant strife is that the limits of the Balkan States have been too narrow. These States have been, to use a homely simile, like animals in a narrow cage, forced to fight one another because they are deprived of the natural outlets for their energies. The habits of thought engrained by this unnatural confinement still survive in the Balkans, but with wider horizons they would tend to disappear.

The Balkan statesmen, if they are wise, will turn the thoughts of their people outwards instead of inwards, and enter upon a larger heritage than they have been accustomed to regard as theirs.

In this expansion the guiding principle must, of course, be that of nationality. It may be that the twentieth century has passed beyond the conception of nationality current in the nineteenth, and that in the more settled regions the idea that every nation with distinct characteristics of its own must necessarily form an independent State is not the last word in politics. It may be that wider combinations, in which a number of separate nationalities may unite their strength, while each one retains sufficient means of national self-expression, are destined to become the rule in the future. But the Balkan peninsula has not yet reached this stage. The age of servitude is too fresh in its memory, and the vigorous assertion of nationality through the medium of separate and sovereign States is a stage that cannot be passed over in the development of their civilisation.

When the claims of nationality have been

met to the utmost extent possible under the circumstances, it is right to bring strategic and economic considerations into play. Frontiers which are not strategic form a temptation to an aggressive people and economic waste is an injury to the peoples concerned as well as to the world at large.

It is easy to discern in the present situation many sources of future dangers to the peace of the Balkans, and therefore to the peace of Europe. We must never forget that the immediate cause of the present war was the inevitable restlessness and discontent of a truncated nation. So long as similar injustices remain, there will be troubled waters which will keep the States concerned in a perpetual condition of tension, and in which neighbouring States will find opportunities of extending their influence. The quarrels of the Balkans, as history has proved again and again, cannot be kept in a watertight compartment, and isolated from the larger quarrels of Europe.

It is now possible to see how, by a process of expansion and re-arrangement, the dangers of future conflict may be avoided.

It is often asked whether, in view of the

mixture of nationalities in South-Eastern Europe, it is possible, even with the best will in the world, to draw boundaries which correspond accurately with national claims. The answer is that, while absolute accuracy is unattainable, yet boundaries can be drawn which would be infinitely more just than those at present existing, and which would leave no injustices of sufficient magnitude to provide the basis of agitation or lead to war.

The probable expansion of Serbia has been considered already. We may hope to see the realisation, not only of what has been hitherto known as the Greater Serbia, in the union of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and the seaboard of Southern Dalmatia with the kingdom (possibly to be followed by the fusion of Montenegro with Serbia), but of the larger ideal of a Southern Slav kingdom, embracing the Croatian and Slovene races. This would involve the annexation by Serbia of the Hungarian province of Croatia-Slavonia, and also of those parts of Carniola, Carinthia, Styria, and Istria in which the Slovenes are a majority. The Croats differ from the Serbs in that they are Catholics in religion and use the Latin alphabet,

and it is only a few years since the Austro-Hungarian policy of "Divide et impera" was able to stir up riots between them; but in spite of this the two races have been drawing together with remarkable rapidity, and the recent declaration of M. Pasich that Serbia is fighting for Croats as well as Serbs finds a responsive echo among the Croat leaders. The delusion that Dalmatia is Italian still finds currency in some high quarters in Europe, but has been exploded again and again by those who know the country itself, and who are aware that it is the home of some of the finest elements in the Serbian race.

Serbia, in a word, is destined to be Ugoslavia, the land of the Southern Slavs, a term which will, like Italia, become the watchword of a "risorgimento" full of import for the future of Europe.

The great proportion of Ugoslavs among the prisoners taken from Austria by the Serbs is a striking demonstration of the unnatural basis upon which the present Austro-Hungarian Empire is founded.

The union of the Roumanian race would be achieved by the inclusion of Transylvania

and other portions of South-Eastern Hungary and the Russian province of Bessarabia.

For Greece, the true sphere of expansion is across the Ægean Sea, in the western districts of Asia Minor. The vigour and enterprise of the Greek race have made not only the coasts, but a greater part of the hinterlands as much a portion of Hellas as the Peloponnese itself. A maritime and commercial people, they are found on all the Turkish coasts. To annex the whole coast-line would be an unreasonable aspiration, but a system of give-and-take would be regarded as natural, and a fitting compromise would be the annexation to Greece of the country drained by the rivers running to the Ægean (roughly contained by a line drawn from the Dardanelles to a point west of Adalia), with Smyrna as its centre.

Bulgaria is the one exception to the rule that Balkan aspirations can be satisfied by expansion outside the peninsula. There are practically no Bulgarians except in the peninsula itself. The union of the Bulgarian race under one flag cannot be secured without the recovery of the populations now subject

to her Balkan neighbours. This, however, is rendered possible by the acquisitions which those neighbours rightly expect to make in other directions, and the amount which each would be called upon to sacrifice would be very small in comparison with its gains elsewhere. A part of Macedonia, which is profoundly Bulgarian in sentiment, will doubtless be restored to her; and there will be a re-arrangement of her frontiers with Serbia, Greece and Roumania.

With the disappearance of Turkish rule in Europe, Thrace, where the expulsion both of Greeks and Bulgarians by the Turks in recent months has left the country almost unoccupied, ought to fall into Bulgarian hands.

Whatever be the future of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, it should in that event be possible for Bulgaria to have an outlet on the Sea of Marmora. Rodosto is the natural economic outlet for the rich hinterland about Chorlu and Lule Burgas.

It is not to be expected that, however carefully the new frontiers may be devised, the various populations will be allotted with any approach to exactness to the States to which they rightly belong. On every

hand there will remain scattered remnants, living under government which they regard as alien. Populations are so intermingled that this cannot possibly be avoided. The remedy, however, is to be found in an organised system of intermigration, and also in proper guarantees for the treatment of minorities. At present these populations are driven out by oppressive or violent measures, and arrive in their own countries as homeless and helpless refugees. There is no reason why the exchange of populations should not be arranged by international commissions, charged with the duty of valuing the properties concerned, and of facilitating the transport of their present occupiers. The hardship of leaving their homes cannot be wholly obviated, but it can be greatly mitigated.

The creation of such a system would follow naturally on the establishment of good relations between the various States. It would be a work of real humanity as well as of political wisdom.

It remains to consider the changes which will be probably effected in the frontiers of States which border upon the Balkan

group. Serious politicians in Italy do not claim a larger extension of territory in the Northern Adriatic than the city of Trieste and the peninsula of Pola. They look, in fact, to the Quarnaro, which in Dante's famous line "Shuts in Italy and washes her frontiers."

In order to settle the Balkan question the Entente must define within certain limits what it will allot to Serbia. But this does not conflict with Italian interests. No party in the Italian Parliament except the "nationalists" claims Dalmatia.

In any case, Italy has far too much to gain from an arrangement with the Entente to raise difficulty at this point. What she does need is a colony where Italian emigrants can live and thrive, while remaining attached to the mother country. Such a colony she has not obtained in Tripoli, but since the Turkish Empire has, in Mr. Asquith's phrase, "committed suicide" and placed its territories in liquidation, the long-coveted district of Adalia, where Italy has already obtained railway concessions, is now available.

As for Hungary, if the Austrian Empire as now understood is broken up, and Hungary remains as an independent kingdom, it may

be that she will retain rights of access to the sea through Fiume, though it must be remembered that the railway approach to it runs through Slav territory.

There must be no thought, however, of allowing the Kingdom of Hungary to keep its present frontiers. This would mean that a perpetual ban would be placed upon the realisation both of Serbian and Roumanian ideals. The Magyar Kingdom must survive as such in those districts in which the Magyars form the majority of the people. There is no reason why such a kingdom should not be on friendly terms with its Balkan neighbours; it might even ally itself to them.

The Austro-Hungarian Empire, as we have shown it, must come to an end if the causes of war in the future are to be effectively removed.

The question of the countries which will in future border on the Balkan States includes the whole problem of the Turkish Empire. It would be right on grounds of nationality that a Turkish State should be left, after the districts in which Turks are not a majority have been allotted to their true possessors. Justice, in fact, demands

that the provinces of Broussa, Konia, Angora, and Kastamuni should constitute a Turkish Kingdom. No part of the coast of Asia Minor is markedly Turkish, but the suggested State should have an outlet on the sea. Such an outlet would be found in the Gulf of Ismid, the Marmora port of Broussa, the ancient capital.

The interests of the Bagdad Railway, a great international institution, must, of course, be safeguarded, but this would not preclude the genuinely Turkish populations from being allowed to organise themselves, according to their own ideas, in a quiet pastoral state—a happy prospect for the few millions of true Turks after the stormy and unsuccessful imperialism of the last five centuries.

If the territorial arrangements above suggested are carried into execution as the result of the great war, the foundations of Balkan unity will have been well and truly laid. The ground will have been cut away from the causes of quarrel and conflict which have so long distracted the Balkans. Each State will have its natural frontiers and its economic outlets, and will be able

to devote itself undisturbed to its internal development.

There will be nothing to prevent harmonious co-operation, and as a result the Balkan States will present a united front towards any empire which might endeavour to bring pressure upon them from without. It is not likely for some time that this harmony will take the form of a federation. It will be a defensive alliance, leaving the maximum of liberty to each individual member. It is highly probable that such an alliance would lead in a very few years to some form of commercial union, which would promote the material prosperity of all the States. For the first time in history we are permitted to contemplate a state of affairs in which the gaunt spectre of Balkan hatred and of Balkan war will be finally laid to rest.

APPENDIX.

The Possibility of Balkan Co-operation.

We have described in a previous chapter the supreme importance of the Balkan States as a military factor, and the vast difference which it would make in the result of the war if the whole or the greater part of this force were thrown into the scale on the side of the Triple Entente.

Is it possible to secure the combination of this force, or the greater part of it, into one whole, and to bring it into play, or is it doomed to remain sterile? In a war in which the rights of the Balkan nationalities are at stake, is it fated that they should neutralise each other's strength, and remain to the end in a blind and senseless confusion?

The policy of the Entente, particularly of England towards the Balkan States, is evidently fraught with momentous issues. If it is possible to secure a combination,

and that combination is not secured, we are throwing away a priceless opportunity. If, as we contend, it has been possible for months past to secure it, then we have already thrown away an advantage which might have been ours. To put it at the lowest, the scales of the war, instead of remaining evenly balanced, might have already been decisively turned.

No one can gauge with accuracy the effect which might have been exercised, but it is perfectly possible that if Roumania had gone to war in the autumn the Austrian armies might by this time have been put out of action, and the Russian Empire might have been able to direct a greater part of its strength against Germany. We cannot divide the Eastern theatre of war from the Western: there is only one war. Germany might, indeed, have continued to fight for the existence of Austria, but only at the cost of withdrawing a vastly greater proportion of her forces from the West, and of leaving the way clear for an advance of the Allies in Belgium and France.

To hasten, even for a week, the conclusion

of the war would mean the saving of thousands of lives and of millions of pounds. This much, at least, is evident, that for such a stake as the support of the Balkans it is worth while to play vigorously and deliberately and far-sightedly. We find ourselves in a crisis which may prove the greatest in history. Efforts ought to be made and risks ought to be taken. It is not the time for a *laissez-faire* policy guided by rules which may be rightly applied in time of peace, but which become mere punctilio when they are allowed to prevent decisive action at a time of supreme need.

What is the net result of our policy up to the present moment ? We have on our side, of course, the great support which comes from the gallant resistance of Serbia—an advantage which came to us through the circumstances in which the war originated. But what has the policy of the Entente been able to add to this initial advantage ?

Among the advantages which might have been gained, the support of Roumania is, perhaps, most widely discussed at the present time.

It is impossible to look with complacency on a situation in which Roumania remains still inactive. Behind this question, of course, lies that of Bulgaria. The uncertain attitude of Bulgaria constitutes a loss to the Entente. (*a*) It provides Roumania and Greece with a pretext for not entering into the war, so that pressure cannot be put on these Powers to induce them to move. (*b*) Serbia is compelled to keep troops on the Eastern frontier and in Macedonia, where the railway is guarded by sentries every few hundred yards. (*c*) We lose the military advantages which might be gained from the co-operation of Bulgaria herself. Her attitude keeps inactive three armies, totalling 1,100,000 trained men.

But the injury which the cause of the Entente now suffers is not confined to the loss of positive assistance. We are confronted also with the danger of a definite neutralisation of the Balkan forces by hostility among themselves.

There is still a danger of Bulgaria entering the war on the other side. The situation is not secure. So lately as the end of Novem-

ber it was generally thought at Sofia that Bulgaria might at any moment be forced to take the side of Austria. The pressure has been removed by the successes of the Serbians, but a similar situation might conceivably arise again.

The state of Macedonia provides a constant temptation to Bulgaria to respond to the urgent pressure of Austria and to attack Serbia.

The Bulgarian army might, at any moment, be free to co-operate with the Austrian armies, and to exercise a very prejudicial effect on the general military situation of the Entente, by placing Berlin in direct communication with Constantinople.

The actual losses and dangers which we have here indicated are not unavoidable. Our four months' work in the Balkans convinces us that a solution is possible. The evil is not incurable.

The interests of the various States can be harmonised sufficiently to secure, not perhaps complete satisfaction or a close alliance, but at least action upon the same side. It

is this common action which is conveyed by the customary term "bloc Balcanique." It does not necessitate a formal alliance, still less a federation; it would simply mean the attachment of the various States individually to the Entente.

It is beyond question that there are terms which, while not alienating Serbia or Greece, are sufficient to induce Bulgaria to range herself on the side of the Entente.

The terms should include the definite promise to Bulgaria of certain portions of Macedonian territory, now belonging to Serbia and Greece, conditional upon the acquisition by Serbia of Bosnia and an Adriatic outlet, and by Greece of Smyrna.

The essential point is that a clear declaration should be made as to the intentions of the Entente. It should embody the considered scheme of the three Great Powers for the settlement of certain portions of the Balkans.

The attempt to persuade the Balkan States to make voluntary agreements with one another should be abandoned.

The suggested declaration should be

made by the Governments of the Entente in conformity with the following conditions :—

(1) The arrangement contemplated must be dictated from without. It is quite unreasonable to expect the Balkan States to settle the problem by mutual concession. None of the peoples concerned would allow their Governments to cede territory voluntarily; but to accept the terms of the Entente is a different matter.

(2) England must take an equally prominent part with France and Russia in dictating the terms. In Bulgaria little confidence is felt in Russia or France, owing to the events of 1913.

(3) The arrangements proposed must be precise, and not vague.

(4) The declaration must be communicated in substance to the leaders of the chief parties in each State.

It may seem hard, at first sight, to demand of a brave ally engaged in a fierce struggle the abandonment of any of its possessions. But this objection is deceptive. The Serbians themselves take the logical rather

than the sentimental view of the matter. They recognise that their interests are bound up with those of the Triple Entente. If we lose, Serbia disappears from the map. If we win, Serbia becomes a great kingdom, including the whole Serbo-Croat and Slovene races, and firmly placed on the Adriatic Sea. All that Serbia asks is that, if she has to make promises to Bulgaria, she shall also receive definite promises herself. She does not deny that the transaction is worth making, and that, compared with the Greater Serbia, South-Eastern Macedonia is a bagatelle.

It is said that Serbia is unwilling to cede territory. In reply, it may be said that Serbia would not be asked to make territorial concessions voluntarily, which, of course, cannot be expected. Her Government would be in a position to say to the Skupshtina that it was merely accepting the terms imposed by Russia and her Allies.

The strong objection felt in Serbia to any concession arises from the general belief that the proposed arrangement involves precise promises to Bulgaria without corre-

spondingly precise promises to Serbia. But we have found many Serbs ready to admit that it is worth while to concur in promises to Bulgaria in order to make their own future more secure. Many leading Serbs feel that it is more true to Serbia's traditions to keep her eyes on the glories of a United Serbia (as indicated in M. Pasich's recent declaration) than to sacrifice the latter for a part of Macedonia.

They do not deny that the interests of the Entente must be considered, because Serbia would have been annihilated without Russia's aid, and that the Entente's interest ought not to be sacrificed by Serbia's opposition to an arrangement

It is alleged that the Serbian army would be chilled and has, in fact, been chilled by the prospect of pressure from the Entente. The recent victories prove that this was not the case ; but, in any case, a scheme which helped to bring in Roumania to the aid of Serbia, and which removed the danger coming from Bulgaria, would be the best service to the Serbian army.

The main objections raised to the policy

of a simple declaration of the terms of the Entente and of definite promises are :—

(1) That Serbia might be disheartened, or even make terms with Austria, and that Greece might refuse to give military aid when called upon.

The real test of the soundness of this objection is not what a Prime Minister says in bargaining, but what statement he would be able to make to his own people. The points which could be made in such statements are indicated above.

(2) That it savours of absurdity to promise territory which we have not yet acquired.

This objection has already been overruled, since territorial promises have been made, though only in a vague form.

Germany and Austria have already made definite promises, and these are not regarded as absurd, their conditional character being understood.

No one can blind himself to the difficulties which diplomacy has to face, in dealing with a number of small States, with interests which at first sight seem conflicting, and inspired by mutual hatreds of long standing.

But to admit this is not to dispose of the matter. The broad issue which confronts the policy of the Triple Entente is the issue between drifting with the stream on the one hand, and on the other grappling with the difficulties of the situation, taking the risk even of rebuffs and failures, in view of the vastness of the stake for which England, France, and Russia are playing. It is not too much to say that the diplomatist might take a leaf out of the book of the soldier and the sailor. At present, while military and naval action is being pressed forward with determination and high technical intelligence, it is entitled to more adequate support from diplomacy than it has hitherto received.

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